METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

NEWSLETTER FOR CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

NEWSLETTER

FOR

CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVERS

IN

ENGLAND AND WALES

NO 15

OCTOBER 1985

Produced by:

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and Practices Branch
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Bracknell
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OBSERVERS NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 1985

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of the Newsletter which will be the last in its present form.

The first Newsletter was issued in October 1978 and from thereafter every six months. However, after careful consideration it has been decided that subsequent issues of the Newsletter will be produced yearly, the next edition will therefore be issued in December 1986. We hope to include some new articles and ideas in the next issue and of course we are always happy to receive correspondence from our readers for inclusion in the Newsletter. Perhaps you would like to tell us something about the history of your station or of any unusual problems you may have encountered during your observations or indeed anything which you consider would be of interest to your fellow observers.

In this issue we have the concluding extract from Mr G W Bryant's article, "Archiving and Quality Control of Climatological Data". In addition we reproduce, by kind permission of IPC Magazines Ltd, an article previously published in the New Scientist entitled "Who Forecasts the Weather Fairly?".

For those of you who are interested in attending one of the observers courses in 1986 the dates of the first three courses are listed below.

24-28 February 1986
9-13 June 1986
30 June - 4 July 1986

Letters giving details of these courses together with application forms will be sent out towards the end of the year. One further course is planned for later in the year.

Finally I would like to congratulate all those observers who have received an award this year in recognition of the good quality data they have consistently provided over the last fifteen years or more. I hope you will continue to enjoy observing the weather in the knowledge that the data you provide has and will continue to make a significant contribution to the climatological records of your area.

J Gloster

By kind permission of IPC Magazines Ltd we are able to reproduce the following article by Mr I Williams which appeared in the New Scientist Magazine.

WHO FORECASTS THE WEATHER FAIRLY?

Weather forecasts from your national press, Saturday 21 July 1984:

London - drizzle then sunny periods (Times, Telegraph)
- dry and sunny (Financial Times, Express, Mirror, Daily Star)
- cloudy (International Herald Tribune)

Plymouth - mostly dry, sunny periods, risk of isolated showers (Times)
- thunder (Financial Times)
- sunny intervals, showers later (Express)
- mostly dry, sunny periods (Mail)
- dry and sunny (Daily Star, Mirror)

Edinburgh - mostly dry (Mail)
- mostly dry, sunny periods (Times)
- occasional rain (Express)
- cloudy, occasional rain or drizzle (Guardian)

This kind of thing is fairly common: the only reason the Meteorological Office and the general public put up with it is that no one seems to realise what is going on. Our forecasters are much maligned, but their forecasts are being edited, revised, amended, summarised and emasculated until they are nonsense. Do you really think the Met Office issued a different message to each newspaper on the evening of 20 July?

The atmosphere is changing all the time, and the Met Office tells a new story every six hours. Those of you reading your quality daily at breakfast might not realise that the chart forecast for midday they give you was produced at 4.30 the afternoon before. There have been two more issued, one at 10.30 pm and another at 4.30 am while you were asleep. In the normal westerly situation there is not much point in studying a forecast chart that old. Which is why the Telegraph, to its eternal credit, gives you the actual 1200 Atlantic chart for the day before.

It is vital to be told when the forecast was issued. Did you know that a Pennsylvania newspaper has recently been taken to court for printing two-day-old weather reports as forecasts?

When the forecast leaves the warm and understanding care of the Met Office, what happens? The detailed messages are sent to the newspapers' offices where they are at the mercy of sub-editors, which explains their frequent contradictions. Radio fares better at least on BBC Radio 4, where several times a day actual Met Office people are allowed to speak to the listeners. (Not for long enough, though).

Many local radio channels - both independent and BBC - make time for similar live chats, some much longer than the standard 150 seconds on Radio 4. But BBC Radios 1, 2 and 3 do a worse job than any newspaper, and condense the national forecast to fewer than half a dozen words thrown together in at the end of news bulletins -if there's time. Some of these are so ludicrous that they must earn the Met Office a pretty poor reputation.

Large sections of the media still assume that nobody lives in the wild country beyond Hemel Hempstead and Reading. The worst examples of forecasts are found in radio and newspaper "summaries", where an editor has tried to condense into four words all the carefully thought-out regional variations from the Shetlands to the Scillies. Thirty-seven million people live north of a line roughly through Ipswich - Bedford - Bristol: but facts like these have never penetrated to that desk in the BBC where the Met Office's carefully considered phrases are squeezed into quick one-liners.

Television has ended up with almost as many different visual aids as there are TV weathermen. We also have a forecaster who knows that as he starts to explain this erratic thundery low moving up from France, the tapes are already rolling for the next programme in 75 seconds' time.

Independent Television News has never - as far as I can remember - gone in for national weather forecasting. It leaves that to the BBC. But ITV's local stations all do their own thing in an amazing variety of ways. Grampian, for instance, has its forecasts from a private company, which gives a good Atlantic synoptic chart as well as detailed local conditions.

TSW's Graham Danton, by contrast, also shows Atlantic synoptic charts, but devoid of isobars. Just pause for a minute and imagine a synoptic chart without isobars. No, I can't think what use it is either. But again his local board has plain language information, no symbols. His opposite number at the BBC, Craig Rich, sticks to the official BBC type standard symbols placed over the map of SW England.

These symbols - black and white clouds, tear-drops for rain, and so on - have gradually come to be standardised by the Met Office; they each have a fairly precise meaning - the white cloud indicates, for instance, fine-weather clouds that may be thin and patchy. They are so well known that I am surprised TV-AM went to the bother of inventing their own, which are either out-and-out twee or totally indecipherable except for the cherub in the cloud, which manages to be both.

The latest fad is for satellite pictures. What does this satellite business really tell us? Down in Devon I have sat under 8/8 stratocumulus through the evening and seen a satellite picture at 9.25pm showing the south-west seemingly cloudless; and I've walked in reasonable sunshine at a time when the satellite was showing snowy-white cloud all over southern England. The interpretation of satellite photographs is a skilled business, and a seven-second glimpse is no help whatever. It's just another gimmick to keep us hooked to that channel. Most of the TV views are from the equatorial satellite, which is fine if you're just of to a holiday in Spain, but it's not so good if you want to know what's going on over Darlington.

The satellising of meteorology has also started an unfortunate fashion in showing a grotesquely distorted map of Britain - where Bristol to Edinburgh is apparently a shorter journey than Bristol to London. This was appearing on BBC2 earlier in the year, with their weather summary written down the middle. There are worse cartographic disasters occurring on TV news every night, I know, but whoever thought this one up should be banished to the Ordnance Survey for 20 years.

What do we need, then? Newspapers wanting a forecast should print what they are given, for the regions appropriate to their editions. The Met Office has already pruned the area forecasts down to an irreducible minimum; the remaining words are all vital. Press and radio should be totally banned from giving British summaries unless they are put out by the Met Office. All forecasts in the national and local press should carry a time of origin. The radio presentations from the London Weather Centre (on Radio 4) should be allowed a variable time from 2 to 4 minutes, rather than their fixed 2½ minutes as now.

But above all we need consistency. For instance, on the morning of 6 August, Francis Wilson (BBC TV) at 7.58 am and Radio 2 at 8.05 were talking about cloud moving southeastwards, and rain over northwest England. But BBC1 (SW) at 7.55 had said a belt of light rain would move across Southwest England, and Radio 4 (at 8.30) repeated this. It doesn't really matter who was right (it actually rained in Devon from 3.15 pm), but it does matter that two radically different forecasts were being put out by the same broadcasting organisation at the same time.

On TV I would like less pseudo-science (satellite presentations and photographs) and more detail in the forecast. There should be a campaign by the Met Office to standardise any symbols on weather maps. But do we need symbols, I wonder?

I would beg and pray that real synoptic charts continue to appear, and that perhaps just once a day we might even get back to the two minutes and fifty seconds that the TV weatherman was allowed in 1963. That's one minute and thirty-five seconds longer than at present, though I admit we see him far more often during the day.

There is one small doubt in my mind about all this; I don't know just how far the Met Office itself is to blame for pandering to the media's need for the kind of instant five-second British prognoses you hear on the radio, for instance. But I do know that there seem to be a great many people who work solely to prevent you getting hold of the original details.

So you think you've heard the forecast? - but whose was it, I wonder?

Editor

Mr Williams, who wrote the above article, joined the Meteorological Office in 1947 and served at various outstations before resigning in 1954 to pursue a career in Industry. He is now a freelance writer, usually writing articles on topics of interest to Industry.

AWARDS TO OBSERVERS IN 1985

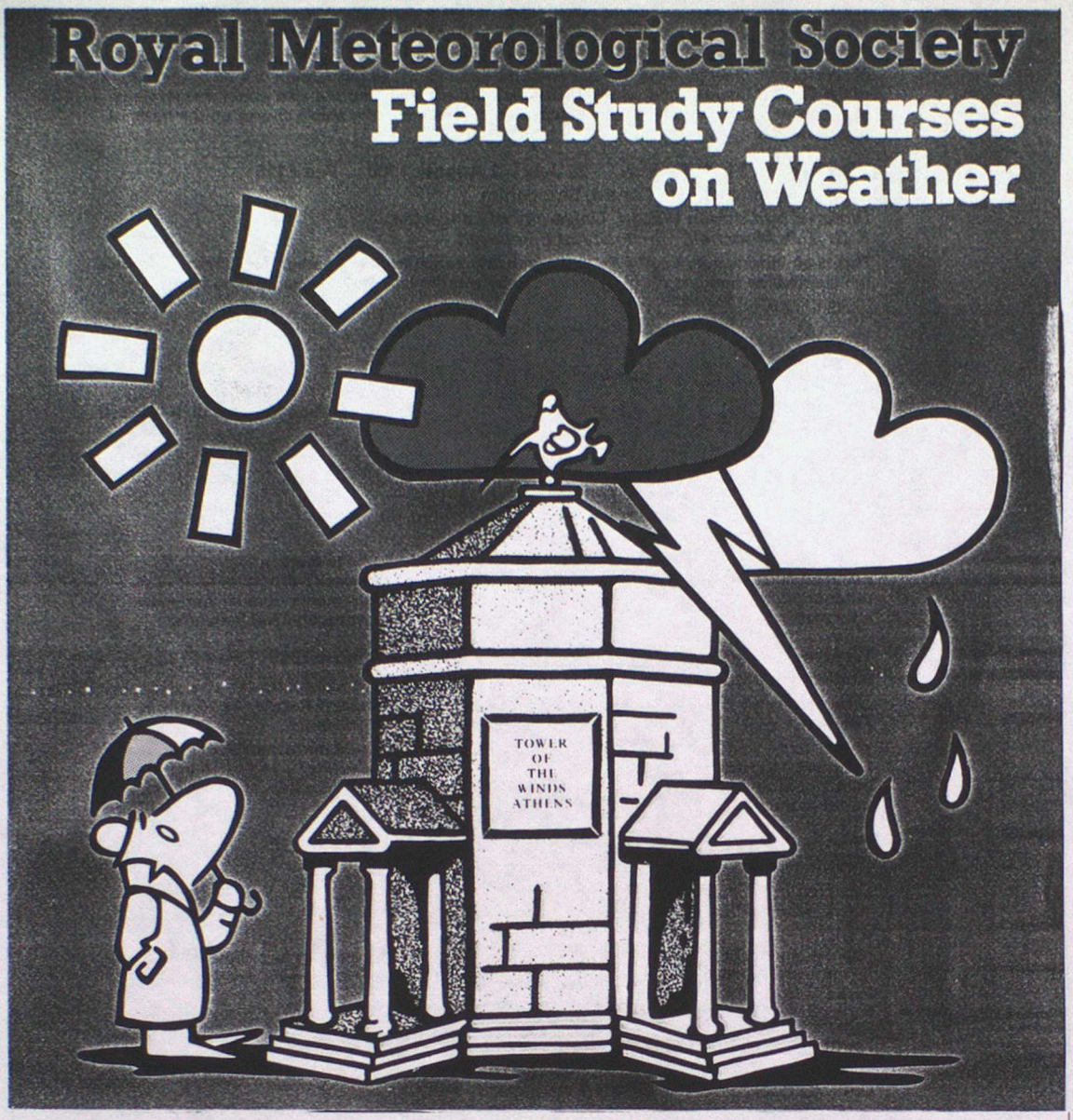
The following observers have received a book award this year in appreciation of their long period of co-operation.

OBSERVER	STATION	PERIOD OF SERVICE
A EVANS	BALA (Gwynedd)	16 years
P DAVIES	LONG SUTTON (Hampshire)	16 years
D BRAGG	SWANAGE (Dorset)	16 years
J K HULME	NESS GARDENS (Cheshire)	16 years
E JONES	BALA (Gwynedd)	15 years
F H C KENDALL	BUDE (Cornwall)	15 years
W STRATFORD	GRIZEDALE (Cumbria)	15 years
M B EDGE	KEELE (Staffordshire)	15 years
J BAILEY	MACCLESFIELD (Cheshire)	15 years
C A SLACK	MANSFIELD (Notts)	15 years
J BENNETT	RYDE (IOW)	15 years
H EDWARDS	RYDE (IOW)	15 years
P G R DUFF	SANDOWN (IOW)	15 years
Capt F HILLS	TORBAY (Devon)	15 years

In Scotland one observer was presented with a barograph and one with a book award.

Royal Meteorological Society

Field Study Courses on Weather



COURSES IN 1986

Weather under Sail 17-24 May 1986 Fee £180 approx.

Directed by Mr Richard Ebling, Cardiff Weather Centre
Run in conjunction with the Island Cruising Club

Sailing from Salcombe in Devon the course takes place aboard the Club's 70ft former Brixham sailing trawler "Provident" which has berths for 12 plus Course Leader, Skipper and Mate, not forgetting a full-time cook. The destination will be the waters of the English Channel and you will learn not only about meteorology afloat but also about sailing a gaff ketch rig, from measuring weather elements to influencing the ship's course on the basis of your forecast!

Understanding Weather 8-15 August 1986 Fee £130 approx

Malham Tarn Field Centre, Yorkshire
Directed by Dr Keith Weston, University of Edinburgh
& Dr David Warren, British Antarctic Survey

A course in which you are immersed in the weather and all things meteorological in the beautiful surroundings 1300ft up in the Yorkshire Dales. A full week's programme of talks, outdoor work and films includes wind and temperature measurements from sailing boats, a forecasting competition and the launching and tracking of hydrogen-filled balloons.

Weather Science and Weather Forecasting 20-27 August 1986 Fee £130

Leonard Wills Field Centre, Somerset
Directed by Dr Bob Riddaway, European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts & Dr Geoff Jenkins, Department of the Environment

Would you enjoy learning how to understand weather charts and make your own local forecast? - to track weather balloons to measure high altitude winds? - and to be involved in lots of other weather activities, all in the informal atmosphere of a beautiful old country house in the Exmoor National Park? Then this is the course for you.

Weekend Courses:

Understanding Mountain Weather 3-4 May and 25-26 October 1986

Directed by Mr D.J. George, Meteorological Office in conjunction with the Sports Council (No previous knowledge needed)

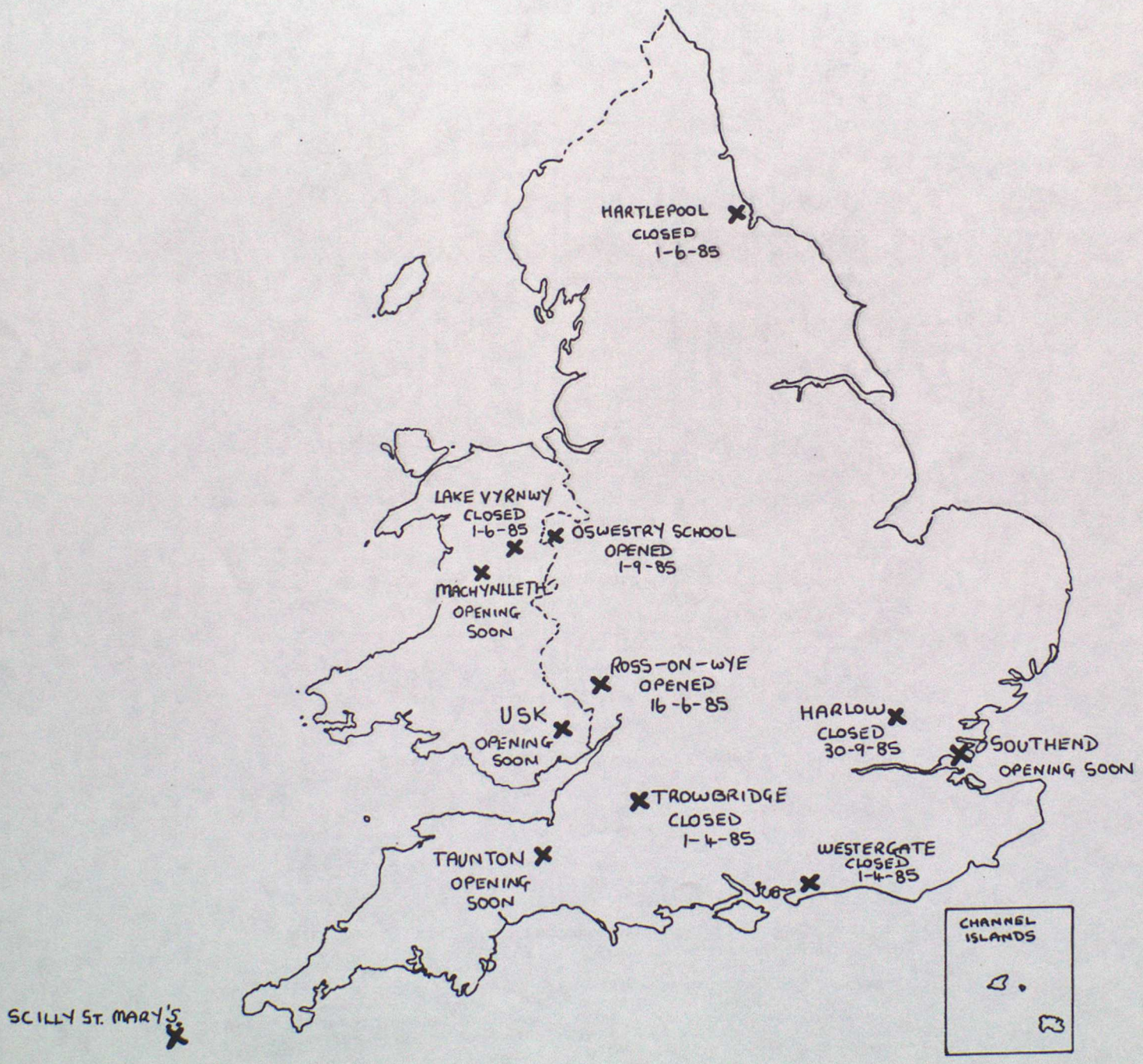
Bookings (including deposit of £25, deducted from course fee of £49) to:
National Centre for Mountain Activities, Plas-y-Brenin, Capel Curig, Gwynedd.

For further details of the above courses please write, stating your specific interest, to

The Executive Secretary, Royal Meteorological Society, James Glaisher House, Grenville Place, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1BX

THE MAP BELOW SHOWS THE STATIONS WHICH HAVE OPENED OR CLOSED SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER WAS ISSUED

MORE DETAILS ON THESE STATIONS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGES 8,9



NEWS OF STATIONS

It gives me great pleasure to welcome five stations who have joined or re-joined the voluntary network during the last six months.

ROSS-ON-WYE

The Health Resort station at Ross-on-Wye (Herefordshire) was formally re-opened in May by TV Weatherman Ian McCaskill and the Mayoress of Ross. The site chosen is the same as was used by Mr F J Parsons who ran the former station from 1914 until 1975 when it closed.

OSWESTRY SCHOOL

The climatological station at Oswestry (Shropshire) commenced co-operation in September.

SOUTHEND

The Health Resort station at Southend (Essex) has re-joined the network after an absence of nine years. Southend's history of co-operation began in 1903 and their present site was used from 1971 until they closed in 1976.

TAUNTON, VIVARY PARK

Climatological readings have recently commenced from Taunton (Somerset) although rainfall readings are available from this station since 1900.

USK

The Agro-Met station at Usk (Gwent) has re-joined the network after a break of five years. Usk first joined the voluntary scheme in 1924 and continued without break until 1980.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE

SCILLY, ST MARY'S

The Health Resort station at Scilly, St Mary's formally an Auxiliary reporting station has transferred to the voluntary climatological network.

STATION CLOSURES

We are sorry to report over the last six months five stations that have closed.

HARTLEPOOL (CLEVELAND)

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Mr H Lamb in June this year. Mr Lamb had been a voluntary observer for over 34 years and was responsible for setting up the Hartlepool climatological station. He was presented with a barograph in 1981 in recognition of the quality and longevity of his reports.

TROWBRIDGE (WILTSHIRE)

The climatological station at Trowbridge run by Dr G T Meaden has closed following his move of house. However, Dr Meaden hopes to re-commence co-operation at his new home in Bradford-on-Avon at a later date.

LAKE VYRNWY (POWYS)

The Severn Trent Water Authority station at Lake Vyrnwy has closed following the retirement of the observer Mr T Hughes.

WESTERGATE (WEST SUSSEX)

The climatological station at Westergate School has closed following the transfer of the chief observer and the retirement of the deputy. In addition the site used for the instrument enclosure was required for a new car park.

HARLOW (ESSEX)

The climatological station at Harlow which commenced co-operation in 1963 and was run by Standard Telecommunications Laboratories Ltd has now closed.

STOP PRESS

One more station which will be opening shortly is at the Centre for Alternative Technology, MACHYNLLETH (Powys). We welcome them to the climatological network and look forward to many years of mutual co-operation.

THE CONCLUDING EXTRACT FROM MR G W BRYANT'S ARTICLE ARCHIVING AND QUALITY CONTROL OF CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA REPRODUCED FROM THE METEOROLOGICAL MAGAZINE, 108, 1979 pp 309-315

(d) Quality control by spatial comparisons

The data may be regarded as substantially correct as soon as the queries raised by internal quality control have been dealt with. However, there are a number of elements whose values are not easily checked by any of the preceding programs and so a series of spatial checks has been introduced. These are based on the principle that climatological parameters measured at neighbouring stations are likely to be correlated to some extent. Such parameters can therefore be checked by comparison after allowance is made for differences in station altitude or topography.

Ideally, such comparisons should be made within groups of about ten stations but the dense network which this requires is only available for daily data. Areal quality control, as opposed to interstation comparison, is therefore only used to quality control maximum and minimum temperatures and sunshine duration. For this purpose the UK, excluding Scotland, is divided into areas containing between seven and fourteen stations which are regarded as having a similar climatology. Quality control then begins by 'normalizing' the daily values for each station. For temperature, this is done by subtracting the station value from the monthly mean temperatures while sunshine values are normalized by dividing the station value by the monthly mean sunshine duration. Each normalized value is then compared with the mean of the values from all the other stations in that area for that day. The value is queried if it differs from this mean by more than two standard deviations and either 2.5°C for temperature or 20 per cent for sunshine duration. When a value is queried, it is excluded from further analysis.

Areal comparison was found to be unsatisfactory for Scotland where the complex topography greatly reduced the number of stations in each area, and so the second program in this series was developed. For the Scottish stations, the values of the temperature extremes for each station are compared with those at two neighbouring stations and queried if they differ from both by more than 2°C. However, quality control of sunshine duration proved impracticable except by inspection. This technique requires much more time from the scrutineers than those previously described and, to make the job easier, the print-out lists, for each Scottish station, the maximum, minimum, grass minimum and 09 GMT temperatures and the sunshine duration if reported. The print-out itself has been simplified by arranging the stations in a chain, with some breaks and duplications, in which each station is compared with the previous and subsequent stations.

The errors detected by these methods must obviously be fairly large to exceed the limits which have been set but half the queries are still rejected. The problem probably lies in the methods used to select the stations which make up each area. More scientific methods involving factor analysis are being investigated and it appears that these will give more representative areas which will vary with element and weather type.

The two remaining programs both rely on interstation comparisons. The first of these checks pressure measurements at stations which do not report at all synoptic hours by comparing every such station with the nearest hourly station. The theoretical pressure difference between the two sites is first computed at all relevant hours by using the measured values of wind speed and direction to estimate the geostrophic wind field and, hence, the pressure gradient. From this value and the value of pressure at the hourly station, the pressure at the subject station is calculated. If it differs from the reported value by more than 1-2 mb (depending on the separation of the two stations) then a query is raised. Since the pressures

reported at the hourly station will have been quality controlled by time sequence checks, the error is assumed to be in the data from the subject station.

The final program to be run is quite different from the others in that it checks for errors in the instrument rather than in transcription or keying. Every year, about 5 per cent of the anemographs in use in the United Kingdom network develop faults which are often only detected at the next site inspection. A quality control program has therefore been developed which can detect some of these faults by comparing the wind direction at each station with that at the nearest two stations.

There are usually differences between the hourly wind directions at any two sites in the short term owing to synoptic effects, and in the longer term owing to differences in topography and exposure. The program solves this problem by first estimating long term effects by examining past data and computing the average difference in wind direction at the two sites for each of the eighteen 20° sectors, using the wind direction at one of the sites as a reference. These eighteen values, which represent the steering effect of topography, are subsequently used to adjust the hourly wind direction at the second site to remove that effect. The differences in direction after adjustment are then averaged over the entire month to remove the short-term effects. If both anemographs are correctly adjusted and the exposure has not changed then the average difference should be close to zero and the standard deviation will be a measure of the short-term effects. When either value exceeds limits chosen for the two stations, a query is raised. If the scrutineer decides that the query is justified then the instrument is inspected and, if necessary, readjusted and any consequent corrections made to the data.

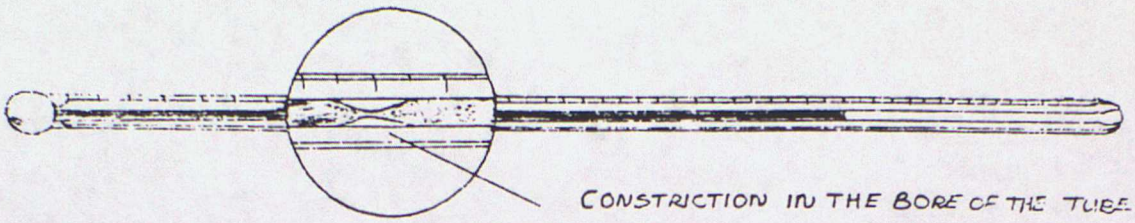
Conclusion

The large amount of climatological data reaching the Meteorological Office every month has led to the development of techniques which enable the data to be quality controlled and archived in machinable form on a routine basis. The quality control routines, which have involved considerable development work, ensure that very few significant errors in the data escape detection, while the archive methods are designed to achieve compact storage and easy access to the data.

The quality control and archiving of the data is not, of course, an end in itself. While the last corrections are being made, the data are already being processed for the preliminary run of the Monthly Weather Report which presents a published summary of the climatological data in the United Kingdom for the month. This publication, which was first produced in 1884, is still the most readily available source of climatological data and since 1974 has been largely produced by computer methods. However, the growing realization of the value of climatological data has led to a considerable increase in requests for more detailed information from industry, farming and research organizations. This has been enhanced by the ability to produce complex analyses with the aid of the computer. There is also a large demand for data by such bodies as the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Department of Energy, British Gas and the Central Electricity Generating Board, either for internal use or for dissemination to the public in processed form.

The effort which has been expanded has therefore helped to meet a commercial need for reliable land-surface climatological data in machinable format. Although there will continue to be gradual refinements of the procedures, this work is now virtually completed and similar attention is now being paid to upper-air and sea surface data where different problems occur.

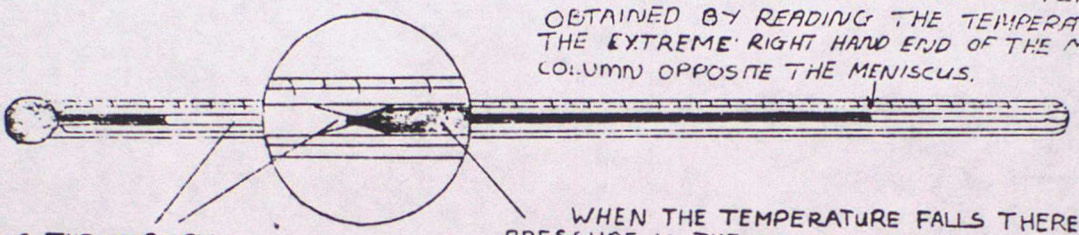
How the Maximum Thermometer functions



Constriction in the bore of the tube.

The mercury forces its way through the constriction as the temperature rises and the mercury expands

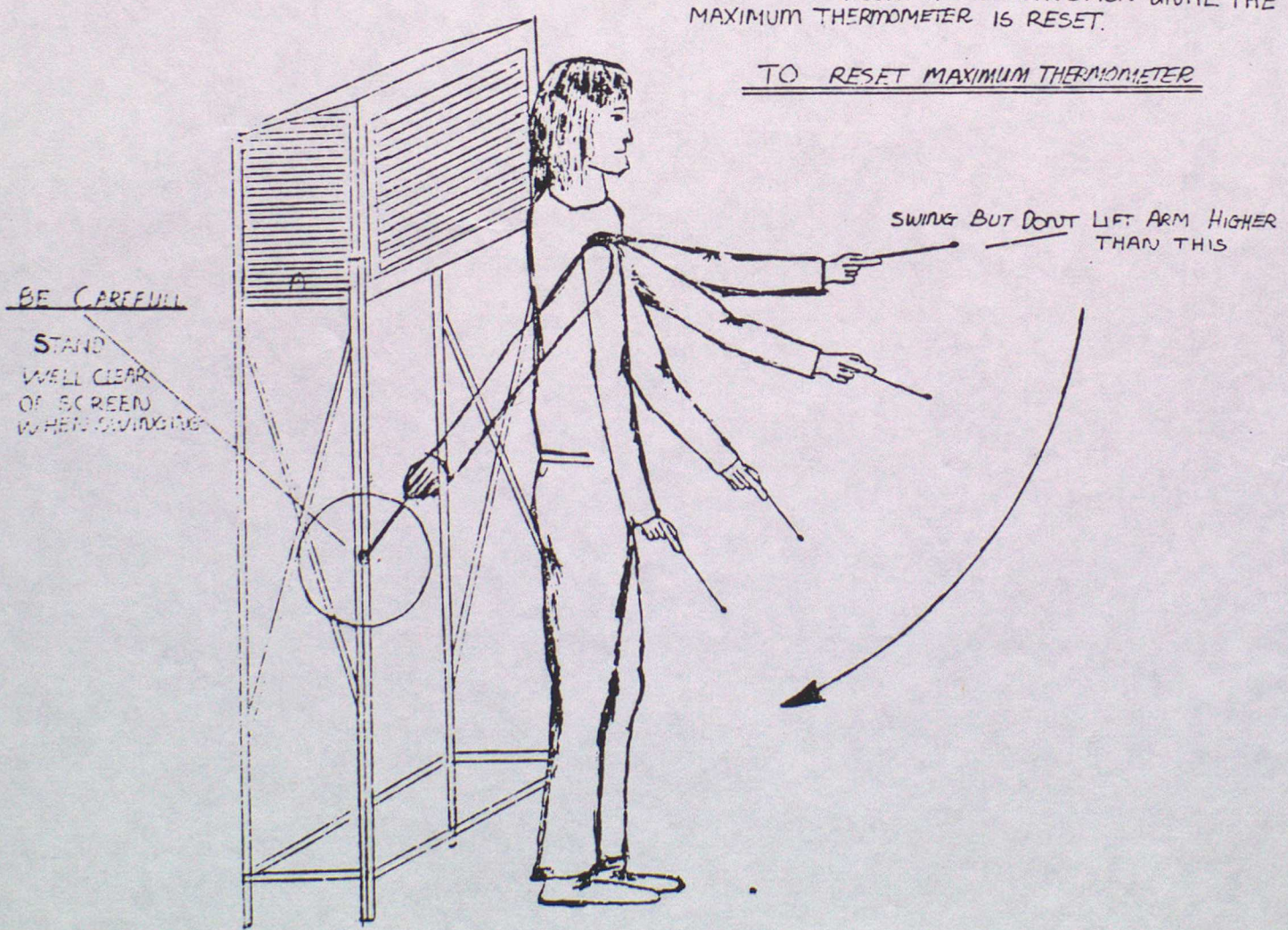
The maximum temperature reached is obtained by reading the temperature at the extreme right hand end of the mercury column opposite the meniscus.



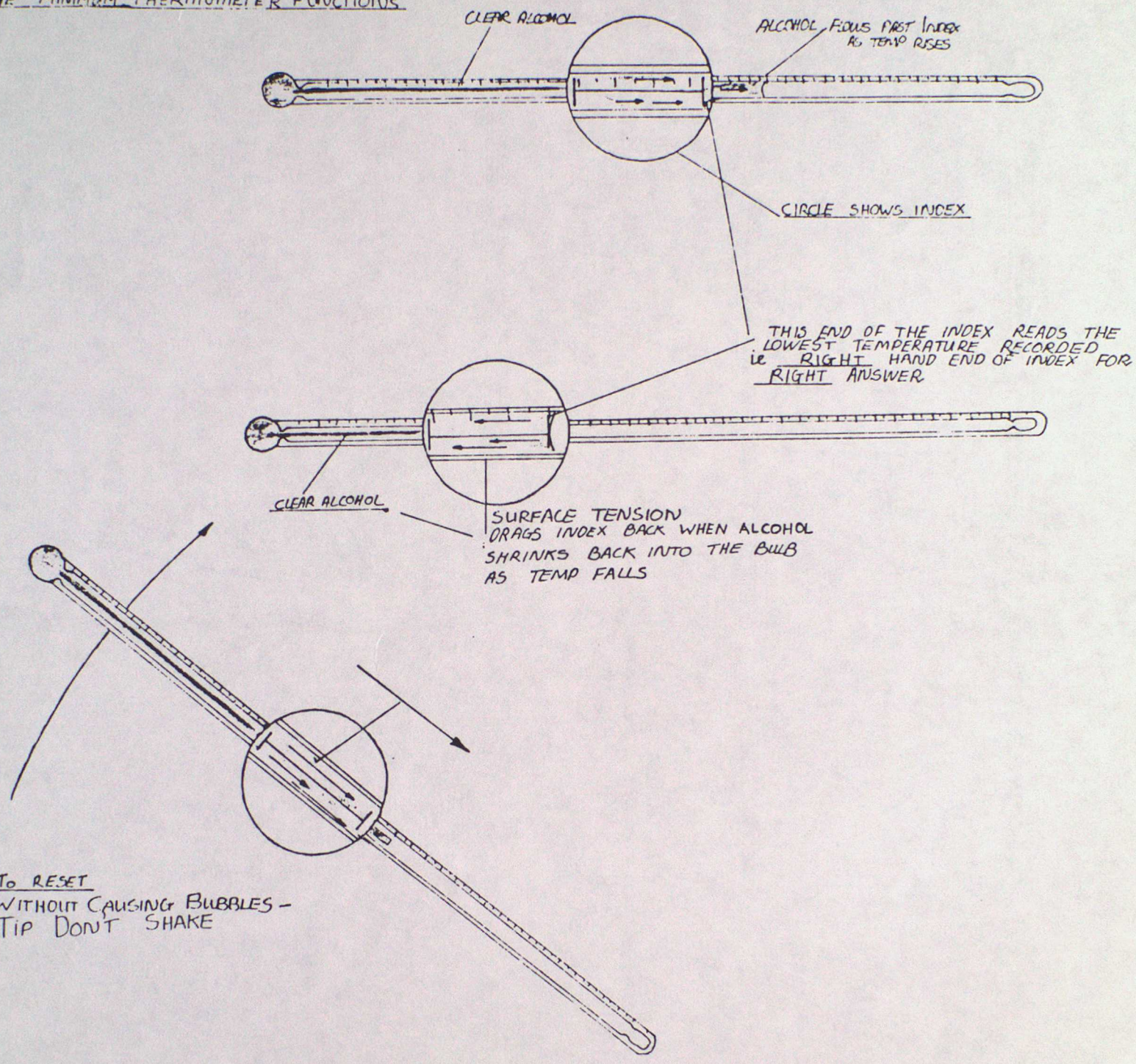
As the temperature falls the mercury contracts back into the bulb leaving a gap between it and the constriction

When the temperature falls there is no pressure in the reverse direction to force the mercury back through the constriction accordingly, once the mercury has come through the constriction on a rising temperature it remains above the constriction until the maximum thermometer is reset.

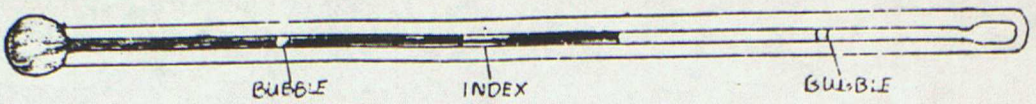
To reset maximum thermometer



HOW THE MINIMUM THERMOMETER FUNCTIONS

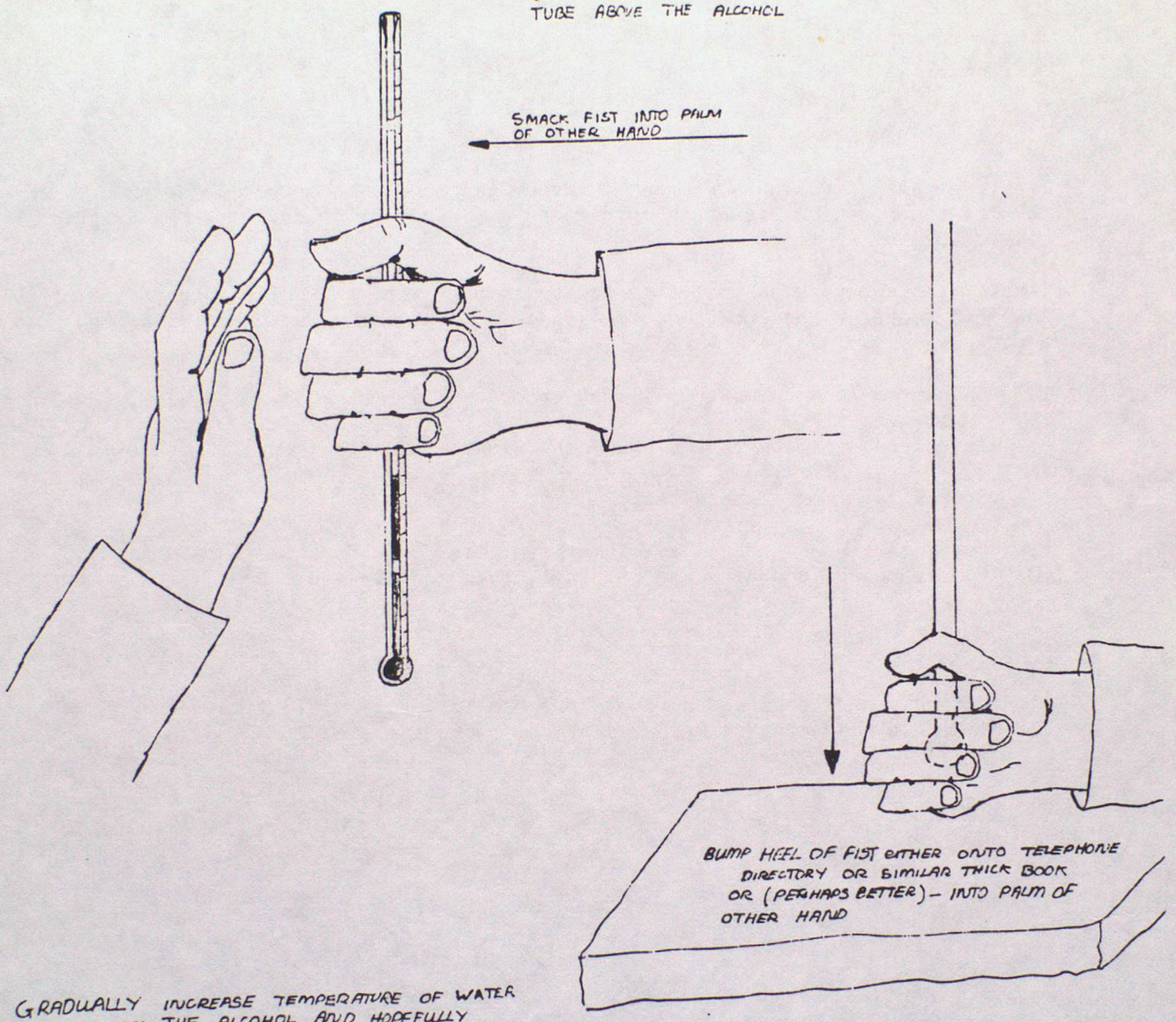

CLEAR ALCOHOL
ALCOHOL FLOWS PAST INDEX AS TEMP RISES
CIRCLE SHOWS INDEX
THIS END OF THE INDEX READS THE LOWEST TEMPERATURE RECORDED ie RIGHT HAND END OF INDEX FOR RIGHT ANSWER
CLEAR ALCOHOL
SURFACE TENSION DRAGS INDEX BACK WHEN ALCOHOL SHRINKS BACK INTO THE BULB AS TEMP FALLS
To RESET
WITHOUT CAUSING BUBBLES -
TIP DONT SHAKE

HOW TO REMOVE BUBBLES IN MINIMUM THERMOMETERS



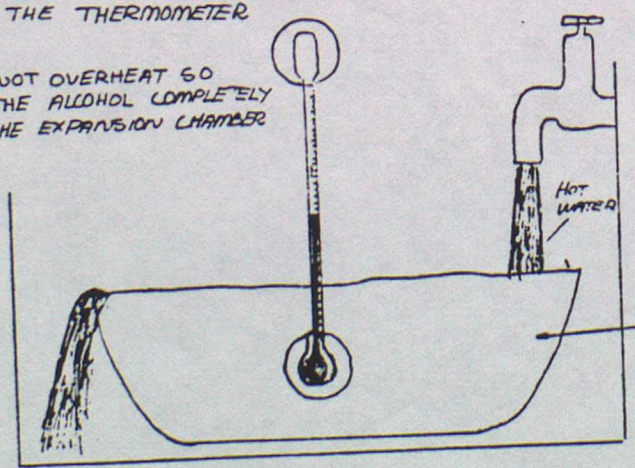
NB. FOR CLARITY THE CLEAR ALCOHOL HAS BEEN SHADED IN.

BUBBLES CAN BE A BREAK IN THE ALCOHOL COLUMN OR A BEAD OF ALCOHOL IN THE OTHERWISE EMPTY TUBE ABOVE THE ALCOHOL


SMACK FIST INTO PALM OF OTHER HAND
BUMP HEEL OF FIST EITHER ONTO TELEPHONE DIRECTORY OR SIMILAR THICK BOOK OR (PERHAPS BETTER) – INTO PALM OF OTHER HAND

GRADUALLY INCREASE TEMPERATURE OF WATER BATH UNTIL THE ALCOHOL AND HOPEFULLY THE BUBBLES ENTER THE EXPANSION CHAMBER AT THE TOP OF THE THERMOMETER

BEWARE DO NOT OVERHEAT SO THAT THE ALCOHOL COMPLETELY FILLS THE EXPANSION CHAMBER



N.B. AFTER ALL THE BUBBLES HAVE BEEN CLEARED, TO PREVENT THEM RETURNING AGAIN, ALWAYS LEAVE THE THERMOMETER IN A VERTICAL POSITION (BULB END DOWNWARDS) FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS SO AS TO ALLOW DRAINING TO TAKE PLACE. AFTER DRAINING THE THERMOMETER CAN BE PUT BACK INTO SERVICE

K Eaves
Galileo 7
76 Brighton Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN11 2EN

Dear Sir/Madam

I have recently written a program for the Spectrum 48K computer to help me compile the monthly returns in my role as co-operating observer at the Brighton Climatological Station.

I have just set up a specialist software company with two colleagues and am now able to offer the program to fellow observers. It offers the following features:-

1. Checks for common monthly return errors.

2. Calculates all the totals and means required for the monthly return.

3. Stores data for a whole year.

4. Produces graphs and tables of maximum, minimum and grass minimum temperatures, sunshine and rainfall, both monthly and annually.

Editor

Although we cannot endorse the above program if anyone would like more information please contact Mr Eaves at the above address.

WEATHER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, JANUARY-JUNE 1985

January started very cold; the coldest area was south-east England, where the mean temperature was -1 °C, 5 °C below normal. On the 4th showers turned to more general snow in Kent and by the 5th Manston had 20 cm of snow lying. At Anvil Green, Kent the temperature remained below -4 °C all day. This was the coldest day in England and Wales for ten months; by contrast Scotland had near average temperatures. Further falls of snow, heavy at times, occurred and, on the 16th, there was a depth of 15 cm lying in Kent and East Sussex. The 16th was also the coldest January day in the London area since at least 1963 with maxima of -4.7 °C at Heathrow and -3.2 °C at the Weather Centre. Another fall of snow over south-west England and South Wales brought up to 20 cm depth of snow, but it was followed after the 19th by the spread of milder weather to all southern areas. However, Scotland and northern England had more heavy snow with gale-force winds on the 22nd creating blizzard conditions in parts of Scotland, with snow lying at Aviemore to the depth of 50 cm. A milder spell followed up until the return of snow on 9 February which brought a bitterly cold spell to all areas of the United Kingdom except the south west and the Channel Islands; there were five consecutive days of severe frosts. During the third week of February day-time temperatures rose above freezing, the winds moderated and freezing fog developed in places for a time until a belt of moderate or heavy rain moving southwards from Scotland brought milder weather to all parts by the 21st. The rest of February was unsettled and rather windy over Scotland and Northern Ireland, but over England and Wales it was a quiet period with light winds and a little hazy sunshine by day and fog by night. March began cold and unsettled, with gales over the Irish Sea and outbreaks of rain in western areas. The second week was quiet with widespread overnight fog, but a cold north-westerly airstream brought strong winds and widespread snow showers, heavy over hills, to all areas on the 13th. The cold spell continued for several days with widespread frost and fog before milder, more unsettled weather spread to all areas from the south west.

Wet, mild and blustery weather continued into April and, on the 3rd, Cromer, Norfolk had an afternoon temperature of 20.2 °C the first time since October that 20 °C had been reached. From the 10th to 13th it was wet and windy with gust of 67 knots along the Cornish coasts and a fall of over 47 mm of rain at Nantmor, Gwynedd on the 11th. Fort William, Highland Region had 23 mm in 24 hours on the 12th/13th. A further period of settled weather was followed by a cold northerly airstream that brought frequent snow and hail showers for a time, but the month ended with a return to fairly mild unsettled weather which continued into May. On 14 May a depression brought widespread thundery rain and a number of places in eastern England had falls of over 20 mm in a few hours. Leeming, North Yorkshire measured 39 mm. Further spells of fine, warm weather alternated with thundery rain or showers, notably on the 25th and 26th when 80 mm fell at Corgary, Co. Fermanagh in 48 hours. On the evening of the 25th thunderstorms developed over south-west England and gradually extended northwards and eastwards during the next day. Over East Anglia on the 26th some of the thunderstorms were violent, accompanied by large hail, squally winds and a marked drop in temperature. At Stansted Airport, Essex the temperature dropped from 22 °C to 12 °C in an hour. An active cold front cleared the thunderstorms away to give a warm sunny spell. Between 4 June and 6 June there were again thundery outbreaks in southern areas and in the 48 hours up to the 6th 79 mm of rain was measured at Madely, near Hereford. A brief spell of cold anticyclonic weather was followed by the passage of a sequence of fronts over the United Kingdom giving periods of further rain. On the 11th there was widespread rain, heavy in many places; 41 mm was measured in 24 hours at Trawsfynydd, Gwynedd. Cold and occasionally wet weather was followed by a slow improvement, and, by the end of the month, with an anticyclone to the south of the British Isles all areas became much warmer.